

## Two 'robbers' killed in Hatiya 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Two alleged leaders of a robber gang were killed in a gunfight with Rab at Hatiya upazila in Noakhali yesterday. The two dead were identified as Saiful, 35 and his deputy Shafique, 24.

Saiful was the son of late Ali Ahmed of Kalirchar village in the upazila while Shafique was a son of Dulal Majhi of the same area.

The "gunfight" happened near Chatlar Ghat in Boyar Char of Hatiya early Monday morning. Rab-11 CPC-3 Laxmipur camp's senior assistant police superintendent Md Jasim Uddin Chowdhury said, acting on a tip off a Rab team raided the area. Saiful's accomplices opened fire on the Rab team and the elite force retaliated, he said.

Rab assistant sub-inspector (ASI) Mofizul and Constable Mahbub were injured in the fire exchange. The injured have been admitted to Noakhali 250-bed General Hospital, he said.

Rab recovered six foreign- and locally-made guns, 10 mobile phones and Tk 54,000 cash from the spot.

Saiful with his gang had been robbing fishing boats in the Meghna river and the Bay of Bengal for a long time. They also used to kidnap fishermen for ransom, Rab officials said.

He was accused in nine cases filed with Hatiya Police Station.

The bodies have been sent to the Noakhali hospital for autopsy.

## CID arrests 8

FROM PAGE 16 University, is also a member of the gang, Molla Nazrul Islam, special superintendent of CID, said at a press briefing at the CID headquarters in Malibagh yesterday.

The two earned a hefty amount of money leaking question papers. The gang used to take Tk 2.5 lakh from each admission seeker and help them get into public universities illegally, the CID official said.

The other arrestees got into different DU departments by allegedly forging admission tests under the academic session 2016-17.

Tanvir Ahmed Mallick, Bayezid, Nahid Iftekhar, Fardin Ahmed Sabbir, Prasenjit Das, Rifat Hossain and Azizul Hakim were arrested yesterday.

At the briefing, the CID disclosed the arrest of Tonoy, 24, at Rangpur on November 14, and Akash, 19, at Gazipur on Friday.

The CID official said they learnt about Tonoy from other arrestees who were held in a case filed in connection with the question paper leak of DU "Gha" unit entrance test on October 20.

Tonoy told us that he helped some students get admitted to public universities, including DU, in 2015 and 2016 illegally. They leaked question papers from the exam centre by using electronic devices before the exams began, the CID official said quoting Tonoy.

As per Tonoy's information, the seven DU students were detained, he added.

Contacted, DU Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani told The Daily Star that they would take action against the seven students after investigating the matter.

On October 20, two Chhatra League leaders -- Mohiuddin Rana, an assistant secretary of the BCL central committee, and Abdurrahman Al Mamun, theatre and debate affairs secretary of the BCL's Amar Ekushey Hall unit -- were arrested along with an admission seeker in connection with DU "Gha" unit exams question paper leak.

Rana was later expelled from the BCL.

A case was lodged with Shahbagh Police Station accusing the three under the public exams law and ICT act.

Based on their information, the CID arrested one Nafi, a private university student, on November 1, and another Anin Chowdhury on November 3, CID official Nazrul said.

All the five have given confessional statements, he added.

Earlier, Amar Ekushey Hall BCL leader Mamun told this newspaper that he got question papers of entrance exams of some public universities from Moshiur Rahman Sameer, a fourth-year student of psychology and also a vice-president of the Chhatra League Amar Ekushey Hall unit.

Mamun and Sameer work for Tonoy, a CID official said, adding that this was a big gang which worked in different phases to leak question papers of different public universities' entrance tests.

Meanwhile, expelled BCL leader Sana earlier said one Alip Biswas, a former BCL leader of Dhaka College unit, now an employee of Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan (BKSP) in Savar, was running the gang and "helping" the admission seekers cheat.

Alip, a key suspect, is on the run.

## Why spend time

FROM PAGE 1

arrested. Hearings on the cases of death row convicts are also pending. Why do courts spend time on such trivial issues instead of disposing of those cases?" she said.

The premier made the statement after Jatiya Party lawmaker Kazi Firoz Rashid drew the attention of Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid to a writ petition filed with the High Court on the PEC and JSC exams.

Supreme Court lawyer Eunus Ali Akond submitted the writ petition in July last year, saying that the government was empowered under the Intermediate and Secondary Education Ordinance, 1961, only to hold secondary and higher secondary certificate exams.

The government was not allowed to hold JSC exams, he said, adding that schoolteachers were engaged in coaching business due to the introduction of the exams.

After hearing the petition, the HC in September last year issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why the government's decision to hold JSC exams should not be declared illegal.

Firoz yesterday blasted the education minister for continuing Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Primary Education Completion (PEC) exams, saying such a system was "illegal and unconstitutional".

"As the matter is now sub judice, the

government can't take such exams until the writ petition is disposed of," he told Jatiya Sangsad.

Participating in the unscheduled discussion, Hasina said, "I am responsible for the PEC and JSC exams. I've introduced the system as teachers used to pick only a few students of classes V and VIII for scholarship exams, which was discriminatory for other students of those classes."

The PM said the teachers used to focus their attention on those few selected students, but some meritorious students might be left out.

"That's why I introduced the system so that all students can take such exams."

About the SSC exams, she said many students feared sitting for the exams.

"But the PEC and JSC exams help them overcome the fear of exams," Hasina said, adding that the certificates also help them gaining confidence.

The Leader of the House said she was very surprised to hear such words from the JP lawmaker against the PEC and JSC exams.

Referring to the writ petition, she said, "I don't know what would be the court's verdict. It will be unfortunate if it goes against the PEC and JSC exams."

The premier said a section of people "love to file writ petitions on whatever issues they have" and the courts spend time on hearing those petitions.

## AL leader

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While reading out a written statement, the AL leader alleged that vehicles of different media outlets, including DBC, Channel I, Ekattor TV and Boishakhi TV, were targeted by the cadres of Nizam Hazari.

People of the Hindu community were also threatened by Nizam Hazari, he added.

Arzu brought allegations of murder, corruption, money laundering and filing false cases against the lawmaker.

Many AL leaders left Feni due to the lawmaker's personal grudge, he told journalists.

Arzu said Nizam Hazari was sentenced to imprisonment in an arms case, but he "didn't serve the full jail term".

According to him, former Feni Jubo League general secretary Sakhawat Hossain filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging that the law-

maker walked free from jail before serving his jail term. Since Arzu has good relations with Sakhawat, the lawmaker filed nine cases against Arzu of "false allegations".

Asked whether he discussed the matter with the AL high-ups, Arzu said he informed party General Secretary Obaidul Quader about it on Monday. Quader assured him of resolving the issue.

Sakhawat Hossain and Tanvir Hasan, general secretary of Feni District Tanti League, were present at the press conference.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not reach Nizam Hazari for comments as his two phones were found switched off.

Some Feni AL leaders also refused to make any comment on the allegations against the MP.

Hasina said the monthly state honorarium for the war-wounded freedom fighters and the families of martyred freedom fighters has been enhanced to the highest Tk 45,000 and the lowest Tk 25,000.

The PM said, "It's our national responsibility to keep alive the invaluable contributions of the valiant freedom fighters towards achieving independence."

Mentioning that the country got the hard-earned independence through the blood of millions of martyrs, she said, "This country cannot lag behind, this blood cannot go in vain and we won't let it happen. Bangladesh will be built in the light of the spirit of the Liberation War and we'll build Sonar Bangla as dreamt by the Father of the Nation."

Turning to the inclusion of Bangabandhu's historic 7 March Speech in the "World Documentary Heritage" by the Unesco, the PM said history cannot be erased. "This has been proved now."

Describing the Liberation War as the greatest episode in Bangladesh history, Hasina said the country has got the identity of an independent and sovereign state on the world map with this war. "The freedom fighters presented us an independent and sovereign country with their supreme sacrifice."

Spelling out her government's various steps for the welfare of the freedom fighters, the PM said their monthly honorarium has been increased to Tk 10,000 from Tk 900, while the number of allowance recipients has been raised to two lakh from one lakh.

She said the monthly allowance for Birshreshthos has been increased to Tk

30,000, for Biruttam to Tk 25,000, for Birbikram to Tk 20,000 and Birpratik to Tk 15,000.

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Abubakar Sule, who lives near the mosque, said he was present during the rescue operation and that 40 people died on the spot while several others were taken to hospital with severe and life-threatening injuries.

"The roof was blown off. People near the mosque said the prayer was mid-way when the bomber, who was obviously in the congregation, detonated his explosives."

"This is obviously the work of Boko Haram."

Yan St-Pierre, a counter-terrorism specialist at the Modern Security Consulting Group in Berlin, said the bombing fitted a pattern of previous attacks.

The latest Global Terrorism Index, published last week, said that deaths attributed to Boko Haram in 2016 fell by 80 percent.

But St-Pierre said despite this "Boko Haram remains an extremely potent and dangerous organisation" which was far from being "on the back foot", as the military has claimed.

Boko Haram briefly overran Mubi in late 2014 as its fighters rampaged across northeastern Nigeria, seizing towns and villages in its quest to establish a hardline Islamic state.

**Suicide blast**

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Another emergency services official described the blast as "devastating" and said there were "high casualties".

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